

# Senator Jack Scott

## 21<sup>st</sup> District Legislative Update

April 2005



*From  
The  
Senator*

### **DISASTER RELIEF UPDATE**

Here is the latest on emergency aid for those with storm damage that occurred after January 11, 2005. Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency, March 16, for the following counties: Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Orange, Riverside, Kern, San Bernardino and San Diego. And, he has formally asked President Bush to declare those counties a federal disaster area. That action would pave the way for federal assistance from FEMA. At this time, the Federal government has yet to act on this request.

Residents with rain or mudslide damage should contact the numbers below:

In Los Angeles: (213) 974-4781

In Glendale: (818) 548-6462

In Ventura County: (805) 654-3593

Other Cities: 1-866-GET-INFO or contact your local City Hall.

Also, residents with damage from the January rains have additional time to file a claim. FEMA has approved an OES request to extend their deadline for filing Individual Assistance (IA) in Los Angeles and Ventura as a result of damage sustained between December 27, 2004 and January 11, 2005. The new deadline for IA program registration is May 15, 2005; the FEMA teleregistration number is 1-800-621-FEMA.

### **NEWS FROM SACRAMENTO:**

This year may be one of the most important budget debates on public education in recent history. When I look at this year's budget I have to ask: Does this budget keep our commitment to a world-class education system or does it shortchange our kids?

Governor Schwarzenegger recently announced that he would not keep his agreement with the education community from last year. At that time, he asked them to forgo \$2 billion in the 2004-05 year that was guaranteed to education under Proposition 98. However, that money was not returned to education in the 2005-06 budget. Furthermore, his proposed package of school reforms - privatizing teacher pensions, introducing merit pay and changing tenure - has angered many educators.

Recently, the Senate Education Committee, which I chair, held a hearing on the administration's merit pay proposal. Frankly, the proposal was not well developed. Even Republican legislators seemed lukewarm and the Administration asked us to hold the legislation for future discussion. When we need 100,000 new teachers in the next decade, we have to ask whether this particular proposal will attract potential teachers to the profession.

One way we can achieve the goal of improving our schools is by increasing local control over education dollars. I plan to look closely at the issue in this legislative session. I am authoring SB 1053 to establish a pilot program to provide more local authority for certain school districts over their funding decisions. I am also authoring SB 428 that would give school districts greater flexibility in spending money designed for categorical programs.

..... Continued on Page 2:

# LEGISLATION

*News From Sacramento: Continued from Page 1:*

As Chair of the Senate Budget Committee on Education, I recently conducted hearings throughout the state to learn from the public what kind of educational reforms they would like. In forums from San Diego to Fresno to Salinas, one thing was clear: the public wants more money for education and wants more local control.

Public higher education is also at a crossroads. How do we maintain the integrity of our public colleges and universities while keeping a college education affordable? One of my proposals calls for saving college students time and money by requiring University of California campuses to have comparable undergraduate transfer requirements for their majors. This bill is similar to one that I successfully authored last year for all California State Universities.

I am also introducing legislation that would allow the Cal State University campuses to award clinical doctorates in such areas as audiology and physical therapy. These are areas not presently covered by the University of California in their research-oriented doctoral programs.

The state of California's public education requires our immediate attention. If we turn our backs on California's schools, we risk not only the future of our children, but also the future of our state's economy. As Chair of both the Education Committee and the Budget Subcommittee on Education in the Senate, I will have my hands full. But education deserves our best efforts; therefore, I hope to make a meaningful contribution in this area in the months ahead.

*State Senator Jack Scott*

## **THE LIFE OF A SENATE BILL**

Many of the ideas for legislation that I introduce each January are generated during meetings that I have in my district during the previous fall. Organizations (such as city governments, school districts, businesses) or individuals often bring legislative proposals to me to consider. Sometimes, a bill results from problems that are brought to my attention that may need a legislative solution.

Ideas for bills that have merit, are politically viable, and have a funding source are forwarded to the Capitol. The legislature's attorney (Legislative Counsel) drafts the bill for introduction.

All Senate bills are introduced and in print in January or early February. After a 30-day public review period, the bills are assigned to a policy committee. At that committee hearing, the Senators serving on that committee discuss the policy changes proposed in the legislation and then vote on the bill. Measures that are approved and which have a fiscal impact are sent to the Appropriations Committee to determine the cost to the State.

..... Continued on Page 3:

## **Contact the Senator**

### **District Office**

215 N. Marengo Ave.,  
Ste. 185  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
(626) 683-0282  
Fax: (626) 793-5803  
[Senator.Scott@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Senator.Scott@sen.ca.gov)

### **Sacramento Office**

State Capitol,  
Room 2082  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-5976  
Fax: (916) 324-7543

After testimony is heard on fiscal bills, a vote is taken on any bill that costs under \$150,000. If the bill passes, it moves to the Senate floor.

If the bill costs over \$150,000, the measure is placed on the Appropriations Committee "Suspense File" and is voted on after the Governor's budget is updated in mid-May. This updated budget proposal (called the "May Revise") is released after the state's tax agency, the Franchise Tax Board, determines the actual revenue the state received at the April 15 tax deadline. Voting on fiscal bills after the May Revise ensures lawmakers that there is enough money to pay for the programs being considered in this year's legislation.

Bills are then heard and voted on by the full Senate. Bills that pass are sent to the Assembly for consideration.

The Assembly committee hearing process is similar to that in the Senate. After passing the Assembly policy and fiscal committees, the bill is voted upon by the full Assembly.

If any changes (called "amendments") have been made in the legislation in the Assembly, the bill takes one final step before it goes to the Governor for action. If amendments have occurred, the bill must first go back to the Senate side for a final vote on the amendments by the full Senate.

Finally, the bill heads to the Governor's office for a signature or veto. The Governor generally has 10 days to sign or veto a bill. At the end of session, when hundreds of bills are sent to the Governor, the Governor has 30 days to sign or veto a bill.

Most legislation signed into law by the September deadline actually goes into effect on January 1 of the following year. Bills which have an urgency clause (and require a 2/3 vote rather than a majority vote) take effect as soon as they are signed into law.

---

**2005**

# LEGISLATION HIGHLIGHTS

---

## **SB 48 - Ammunition sales to minors**

Closes a loophole in current law regarding the sale of ammunition to underage buyers. SB 48 will require sellers to check I.D. before selling bullets.

## **SB148 - Liquor Store Ordinance**

This legislation is aimed at helping cities crack down on problem liquor stores by giving cities or counties more leverage in enforcing zoning codes. Under current law, cities or counties can only enforce ordinances that were present when a license was first obtained. The bill will give liquor stores a reasonable period of time to conform to changing zone requirements.

## **SB 163 - Pharmaceutical Marketing Costs**

Pharmaceutical companies that contract with the state would be required to report the percentage of their budget spent on marketing and the percentage spent on research and development.

## **SB 271 - Charitable Gift Annuities**

Follow-up to a bill authored by Senator Scott last year. This bill will allow charities to achieve greater portfolio diversification, lower fees and lower transaction costs.

## **SB 652 - Community College/UC Transfer Simplification**

Law would require all University of California campuses to streamline undergraduate transfer courses from the community colleges to the UC's. Follows a similar bill passed last session, which directs Cal State Universities to establish a common lower-division transfer curriculum.

---

## HANDY GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

State Senate: [www.sen.ca.gov](http://www.sen.ca.gov)

Legislative Analyst: [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov)

California Government: [www.ca.gov](http://www.ca.gov)